

Art Workouts, a reflection(2011)



Margit Galanter

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In thinking about the class I led last Monday at Art Workouts, questions at end:



I thought to myself, how to lead people through something that would offer them a sense of themselves, multi-sensorially? Building off the research questions that Abby and I are in as teachers and as co-conspirators in the experiment for this session, I let many of the ones between us so far enter into my construction of the class, and through our recent performance research in letting-it-go, I simultaneously let the preparation and the questions all go when I taught, and let it come from all the conditions that led up to making our environment be as it was in the room together. It is a mysterious thing to be-in-the-teaching-moment, to really let the people and the work we are doing together open up within myself so that I can somehow be a curator for our collective ideas, like a filter with its own motor, some kind of glow-in-the-dark fish.

I worked with the question, how to continue with this desire to make a bridge from a multi-sensorial





experience into the making? A way I thought to do this was both analogous and experiential: work with the sensation of skin (in many forms), and then work also with the skin as the thing which forms, as that magical organ that is a transmediation thru interiority and exteriority (terms which are just signposts for the directions of attention?). We worked to effervesce our skin. We used our practice text found in the basement of Bookends in Florence, MA written the same year of the first Love-In at the Haight. Make skins get very alive as a surface and a place for interaction, and as a place to sense oneself. Then, with this waking up of its sensing itself (and of course all the other senses that interact with the haptic: vision, smell, proprioception, and on and on....), we could maybe understand from this experience what form itself was, what it meant to contain, what it meant to compose the being in space and in environment. That to experience form would possibly teach us something about form and forming. I brought in a version of a friction dance





off of a class I took with Karen Nelson at SFADI back in the 90's I do believe where my duet with River was revelatory. Bringing sense to the conversation when it started to feel like we could become talking heads. Work with the materials and make them ours, now, with love and respect from where they came, with honor for my teachers, and to the moment. All these tools I have had the pleasure of gathering over the years from so many places in my movement practices where we deeply get into the sensation, the design, some outpoured here into the skin of Monday Night Art Workouts. It felt necessary at some point to explicitly bring in some aspects of the research of Lisa Nelson's Tuning, like if we didn't we would be missing the compositional key. So she arose.

There was this incredible paradox that came through in this felt analog of skin to performance skin (In my quests I have come to understand that all conscious embodied experiences have at least some paradoxes





embedded into them). This time this one of waking up the skin as a surface shows how it is not really a separation at all..but more like a way to actually sense the inner and outer landscapes more fully, and as connected. Interpenetration. Intertextuality. Permeability. Body-as-environment.

When we watched one another, it was from having reversed and used our sense memory to restore our positions from the week before as a bridge. We let ourselves notice how we organized ourselves to listen. We reversed sides of this, and let it deteriorate. I used the questions that arose in out of the evening's discussions that were salient for what we were building together: from Milka's presentation about sense memory from her book report and reading, from Ali's infiltration of the relationship of sensation and place, and Mara's image of sensation as language, how I interpreted this as dub. And so many more bodies





brilliance, what the physical research of each Workout participant brought into the space.

Gratitude for everyone's willingness to come along for the ride, for the 5-minute presentations. For the class that proceeded led by Abby to be a kind of foundation, and the years of our work here and how it is continuing to get richer.

So, if I had any questions as grist for the mill for the next class in the series, it would be: How do we get out of the way to let our participants sense themselves? And how is this a bridge to an investigative view? How to more explicitly research the sensations of the mind? How do we challenge ourselves to stay with the material already with us, to build deeply from the arc already starting? And how much to depart from all of this so we can offer a tapestry? Maybe the question is- what is the function





of tapestry, and what is the function of bricolage?
How is it worth exploring this skin to performance
skin further? How do we take instructions from what
the presentations of the students bring into the mix?
How do we fully allow ourselves to be in a research
together, as a fluorescent school of creatures?

Whole body.

